

The Brown Street Beacon

"...Shine out among them like beacon lights,

holding out to them the Word of Life" (Phil 2:15-16)



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If Guided by the Spirit, Why....?

Jesus sent the Spirit to guide the apostles into all truth (John 16:13). Sometimes people mis-apply the statement made by Jesus by applying it to every disciple of Christ instead of restricting it to the ones to whom He was speaking, namely the apostles. Jesus said that the comforter would guide the apostles into all truth. He had reference to the inspiration of the Spirit that the apostles received by being baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5). Thus, when the apostles spoke and wrote, they were not relying on their own wisdom nor were they relying on their ability to recall all the things that Jesus taught them when He was on earth; instead, the apostles received direct revelation from the Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:6-13; Ephesians 3:1-5). While the apostles were just fallible men, who sometimes made mistakes in life, their writings were the infallible Word of God (1 Thessalonians 2:13). We have their writings in the New Testament, and they have been preserved for us by the providence of God (1 Peter 1:23-25).

Since the apostles were guided into ALL truth and since the faith has now been once delivered (Jude 3), the Spirit no longer works in that capacity. He is no longer revealing truth to men by inspiration because there is no new truth that needs to be revealed. When men get behind pulpits across this country, as well as on TV to be broadcasted all over the world, and claim to be delivering messages given to them directly from God, they simply are not telling the truth. I have several questions that I want to ask those who are claiming today to be guided by the Spirit of God supernaturally as the apostles were. I'm not talking about those who just teach the Spirit revealed Word of God from the Bible. I'm speaking of those who claim that God communicates to them today separate and apart from the written Word. Here are some of the questions that I have.

1. If guided by the Spirit, why do you need to use a Bible when you preach and teach? This is a legitimate and honest question. The apostles didn't need written scripture when they taught. Why? Because they were truly guided by the Spirit. Jesus once said to them, "When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you" (Matthew 10:19-20). Now would these words not apply to any man today who claims to be guided by the Spirit? If not, why not? But whenever I see any of these men or women who claim that the Spirit is guiding them, they not only have a bible in their hand, they read from it when they preach. That tells me that whatever they have, it is not the Spirit that the apostles had.

2. If guided by the Spirit, why do you teach something different from what other men who claim to be guided by the Spirit teach on the same subject? I have often wondered about this. Paul never contradicted Peter. James never contradicted John. They all spoke the same things. Why? Because they were all guided by the same Spirit. Why is it today that some who claim to be guided by

the Spirit say that one must be baptized in the name of Jesus but others, who claim to be guided by the same Spirit, say that one doesn't have to be baptized at all? Why is it that some say that it is okay for women to occupy positions of authority in the church, such as pastors and preachers, while others say that it is wrong? The list goes on and on of different and contradicting doctrines taught by those who claim to be guided by the Spirit. Something is wrong somewhere. Could it be that none of these people are really guided by the Spirit?

3. If guided by the Spirit, why do you teach something that contradicts what the Spirit taught in the New Testament? Here is the telling sign that folks today, who claim to be guided by the Spirit, are either less than truthful or are living a life of delusion. Common sense dictates that the Spirit would not teach one thing in the New Testament and then guide men to teach something else today. If such is the case, the Spirit is the author of confusion, and I know that isn't so. Let's look at an example of this. Many charismatic preachers today teach that one is saved by faith only. Remember, they claim that they are miraculously guided by the Spirit. However, the Spirit inspired Peter to tell people, inquiring about salvation, that they must repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38). Furthermore, the Spirit inspired James to write that we are not saved by faith alone (James 2:24). Was the Spirit right in the first century when He taught that baptism is necessary for salvation and wrong now when He inspires men to teach that we are saved by faith only, or was the Spirit wrong in the first century and right now? Anyway you answer that question you have the Spirit of God being wrong at some point and time. The truth is the Bible is right because it was produced by God, having been revealed by His infallible Spirit who knows His mind perfectly (1 Corinthians 2:10-11). When man preaches something today that contradicts what the Spirit taught in the first century, we must put our trust in the Spirit's teaching. And when that man claims to be guided by the Spirit, we must acknowledge the futility of his claim. Every man that I have ever heard claim that God speaks to him through the Spirit today teaches things that contradict what the Spirit teaches in the Bible. My simple question is, why?

Here is the truth. The Spirit no longer guides people miraculously today. The Spirit revealed God's will to the apostles and they took that message and wrote it in the book we call the Bible, specifically the New Testament. The New Testament contains the doctrine Christ and if any man adds to it, he shall be accursed (Galatians 1:6-9; 2 John 9). If someone claims to be a spokesman for God today, not just from the standpoint of teaching the Bible but from the standpoint of receiving direct revelation from the Spirit, put him to the test. Ask him some tough questions about the Bible and see if he can, without thought, give you the right answer. Ask him or her to perform a genuine miracle in order to confirm the word (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3-4). These were things the apostles could and did do in the first century when the written New Testament was not yet complete. What you will find is that these false prophets and teachers will not be able to back up their empty claims. Most of them will not even try. They will just say that you have a lack of faith and dismiss you. Why won't they verify the authenticity of their teachings? It's simple—they are not led by the Spirit at all.

The faith has been once delivered. Put your faith in God and in His book, the Bible. Only then will you be on safe ground. Only then can you be sure that you are following the will of God.

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